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# CONTENT STRATEGY

## BOOT RATINGS

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## WHAT IS BOOTRATINGS?

Boot Ratings is an Amazon affiliate website that generates the bulk of its revenue through organically ranking on search engines, and driving its traffic to online marketplaces.

A nominal commitment is earned for each purchase a user makes on Amazon for the 24 hours after visiting.

The website is comprehensive about its subject, and speaks with a knowledgeable, authoritative voice.

### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Despite attracting a significant visitor count, Bootlink does not produce revenue at the levels it could.

### WHAT WILL WE DO?

This plan will seek to identify areas of improvement, and how to tackle these possibilities.

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## HOW'S THE SITE?

At the moment, Bootratings is still a very safely executed Amazon affiliate site. It has the hallmarks of a incredibly long front page with keywords repeated in rapid succession, and then prompts to lead users to Amazon to make their purchases.

It's efficient in that way.

The copy is well-written, and there is a significant amount of original content on the site. It definitely has the potential to provide value for customers. However, this is where there's a disconnect.

The website somehow cannot attach a personality or a viewpoint to itself. There are hints of personality with the choices for military boots and steel toed boots, but these focuses are not elaborated on or incorporated into a wider brand story.

There are a few callouts to join newsletters, but the newsletter is inactive.

A Pinterest profile is linked from the homepage, but it is also inactive.

The homepage by far receives the most traffic, and it is followed by some individual product pages. Most of the high quality is not read by users, which is a shame because it has serious potential. A drip campaign might be useful to reach visitors who want to learn more about boots, and that gives you a chance to maintain the relationship and convert these visitors at a later date.

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## HOW'S THE SITE?

Amazon affiliate sites are cutthroat in their competition. It's a fight to be first in search results, and often little else.

There are two ways you can approach this: you can either continue fighting for search results through acquiring backlinks and posting optimized content on select pages (which doubtless they are doing as well), or you can make your site into a content-driven trusted "thought leader" style site, which draws people in for the knowledge you can provide instead of the keywords in your copy.e.

I vote for reinvention.

## GOALS

Before making any plans or positing ideas, we must make a SMART goal

**Specific**
**Measurable**
**Actionable**
**Realistic**
**Time-Based**

If a goal is vague, has no benchmarks, does not include directions, is pie-in-the-sky, or open-ended, the goal is unlikely to ever succeed. This is because goals that lack SMART qualities do not define success, and as such cannot achieve it.

**Our goal for Bootratings will be to increase conversions of at least $30 AOV to 15% of site visitors within 6 months.**

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### CORE STRATEGY

Bootratings will inspire people to participate in outdoor activities on a greater scale than they had before. It will push people to leave their comfort zones and try things they never thought they'd do. Much like REI pushes people towards activities like rock climbing and backpacking,

Bootratings will do the same with its own focus activities. The main focus product will continue to be boots, as they are the foundation of any set of outdoor equipment, but this strategy opens the door to a much wider variety of products. Expansion is inevitable in any business.

### THEMES

To reach that new audience and continue to serve your existing audience, Bootratings should divide up its new strategy into "themes." Most ads and organic posts will reference one of these themes.

- Self-Empowerment. Tell your audience about what they're missing in the great outdoors. Share inspiring stories of cancer survivors getting to the peak of a mountain. Talk about the healing power of exercise and the importance of being in nature.

- Service. Volunteer to clean up storm ravaged areas after natural disasters. Be prepared to go whenever, wherever, and always ask, "How can I help?" People love this. They want to live through the person doing it. Post photos of ruined boots with captions like, "Habitat for Humanity got the best of these!"

- Nostalgia. Remind people of their youth. For some, this may be boy scouts or church camps, for others it could be military service. Ask people if they still have their first pair of boots. Work their memories.

## OWNED CONTENT

This is an organic campaign first, so let's see what we can do on your site. I'll propose a few steps to streamline your content creation process, and develop a cycle that will get you ready to go in no time..

## GOALS

Onsite content is pretty simple, it's just what's on your site. Some examples are: homepages and landing pages, pop up messages, all text, FAQs, product descriptions, pricing, and contact pages.

Blogs are technically onsite content, but they are often so varied that they should be treated nearly as stand alone content platforms.

I mentioned earlier that your current site (and its content) is "safe."

I'd probably even say that it's too safe.

Most of the content is dry, and some borders on boring. However, we cannot discount the power of the content. It's gotten you incredible SEO results, so it would be reckless to throw it away.

There are a few ways to change it, update it, and essentially rebrand it that will revolutionize its capabilities.

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## HOW TO RENEW YOUR EXISTING ASSETS

- **Tone**. Who is the voice of Bootratings? What is his or her viewpoint? Does he or she have strong opinions? We have to give Bootratings a personality. Who would you want advice from? How would they give it?

- **Imagery**. This'll be tough as you don't have the product on hand. Check your affiliate agreement with Amazon to see if they provide assets. If they do, that's great. If they don't, use stock photos. Cropping them can make them look less like stock, but it's not perfect. Take your own if you have the time.

- **Error messages**. You don't have a 404 redirect page, it just goes to the front page. This can confuse Google. It might register those pages as existing.

- **Contact page**. You should provide some more guidance or personality here. It's also got quite a few ads running on it, which isn't a good look on a page that's supposed to be for helping customers.

- **FAQs**. Your FAQs are mostly specific questions about owning boots. I'd resection those posts into a blog or knowledge base. FAQs don't normally encompass such specific queries.

- **Keep visitors on page**. This one should be planned very carefully. If you want to start converting people from email and social, you'll have to give them a reason to stay on your page. Funneling them to Amazon to scoop up a purchase works only in that specific context. A thoughtful redesign of the homepage or an extensive landing page system are necessary.

- **Expand and organize your content types.** Your FAQs, reviews, and buying guides overlap a lot of the time. Write down the title and focus of each article and devise a better system. This will eliminate confusion.

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## WHAT IS THE BLOG FOR?

It's important to note that blogs are not (entirely) sales vehicles.

If a blog post is really just a 300 word product description, readers likely won't return. No one wants to hear about a company, especially not one that does something they may or may not fully understand, i.e. Amazon affiliates.

Use the blog to discuss aspects of life that are improved with your product. Go around what's expected and describe a benefit of life with the product. A narrative post is the perfect way to introduce readers to a pain point they have, but might not be aware of.

Here are some suggested categories for blog posts:

- **I thought I couldn't X, but then I Y.** This category highlights solutions for problems people often have that may prevent them from certain physical activities.
Your buying guides would be good for this.

- **Feature Focus.** Review a boot and its maker more in depth, once a week or once every two weeks. Be critical. Not every boot is amazing and perfect. A critical author is more respected and given more authority.

- **Great Outdoors.** This is easy. Travel guides for national parks, news about the environment, whatever is at least tangentially related to the themes of boots. This content is great for organic social because of its wide appeal.

One post per week shouldn't be too much of a burden. For now, don't focus too much on keywords. Focus more on creating great content. It's inbound marketing. People follow quality.

You'll find specific guidelines for making your blog posts more SEO-friendly as well as information about making and sticking to a calendar in Chapter 4.

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## YOUR LIFE OFF THE HOMEPAGE

For you, this will mostly be your social pages as well as email newsletters and whichever digital advertising you choose to go with.

As a digital-only company, you don't have much physical brand collateral, but there are content opportunities you could be taking advantage of. Here's where we see opportunities:

- **Videos**. Video can be expensive, but it doesn't have to be. Take Wistia's example and see what you can make with just your phone and an office. Videos are the most engaging content and even a 45 second quick boot review would do wonders for the personalization of your site.

- **Triggered emails**. Set up an email welcome flow so you don't have to worry about bringing people into the fold when they sign up for your newsletter. This automatically gets sent out once they join.

- **Drip campaigns**. To help maintain the relationship with visitors who aren't ready to convert to customers, set up a series of drip campaigns. These are like the welcome series, except general. They usually aren't event-bound like sales or promotional emails. The good thing about drips is you can set yourself up for a few months by just dedicating 3-4 hours.

Offsite content is essential. It's the only way you can get value from those who visit your website and don't immediately convert.

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## HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

Governance is the structure for all the rules and best practices for your website. This alone is a large project, and one that often takes weeks.

For a small site, it's up to you how simple or intricate you want to make it.

You have a brand, but it's weak. Ill-defined. You need a guide.

- Brand guidelines. What font do you use? Always the same font? What about headings vs. body text? How big are the headings? Are there certain types of images or videos that fit your brand better than others? What content do you NOT want to be on the site? Anything that has to be on every page?

- Style and voice guide. Voice is huge. In my day to day, I'm often the voice of 3 or more national brands. It sounds difficult, but think about it this way. Do you speak to police officers and coworkers the same way? Probably not. You already use many different voices each day. It's just learning how to turn one on. MailChimp's guidelines are great to use as an example.

- Writing for the web. This isn't about SEO, but general structure. Web content is not always the reader's focus. Try to make it easy to scan by breaking it into different sections.

Big blocks
are boring.
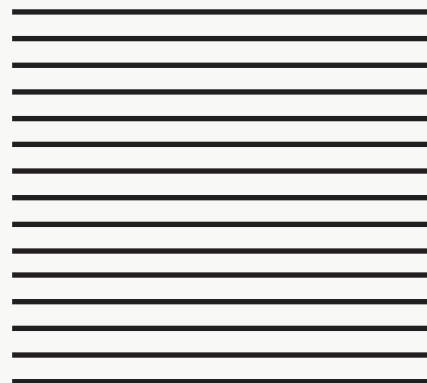
Pictures and
bullets keep
it easy.
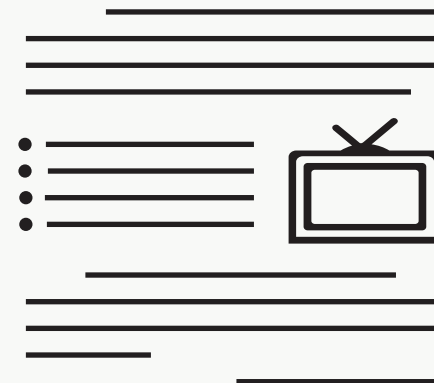
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## NOTES ON PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- Don't forget about SEO. Always remember to include relevant meta data and alt tags for images and pages. If you're doing the SEO yourself, make sure keywords flow naturally.

- Create an editorial calendar. Plan plan plan plan plan plan! If you don't plan, it'll feel like you're spinning your wheels and spending countless hours accomplishing very little. With task managers and planners, you always know what you've done and what you've still got to do. I couldn't live without one.

- Stay Organized. Set this up before you start writing. I use a database so I can organize all my files, but a system of folders works too. Just be aware that you will constantly be adding and moving.

Don't give up on staying organized. You'll regret it.

Excel will become your new best friend. Check the Google Drive I sent for templates.

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## GETTING IT DONE RIGHT

Worklows are more relevant for larger organizations, but as you have some freelancers now, it is a good idea to spend a minute or two thinking about how you want to structure your working environment.

Like UpWork, I structure my marketing department around "deliverables." All work should be towards a product, right? A product can be nearly anything, so it shouldn't be too hard to decide the product you want as the end result.

Often it's easy to forget about steps like revision and checking with a legal department, but it's necessary. For me, I don't revise until I've reached a major milestone. If I revise as I work, it takes a lot longer. Produce, then review, then revise. Repeat.

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WORKFLOW

## PROMOTIONS

Without promotion, sadly a lot of content fails. You probably won't end up promoting your onsite content, but anything offsite, even just for "awareness," is something that could benefit from promotion.

- Social media. Most social networks allow you to give a paid "boost" to your organic content. This is a good way to get your name out there without giving sales pitches to people who don't want them. By boosting a blog posted on Facebook, you can introduce people to the valuable, informative side of your site.

- Paid social. These are specifically product-pushing ads through a social network. This gets expensive quickly, so don't use subpar material. Reserve your best for this option.

- PPC. Your site relies a lot on SEO, so I don't recommend this. If you're advertising on pages your organic results already show up on, both the paid and organic post will get fewer clicks and possibly lower quality scores. It's called "cannibalization."

- Syndication. Guest post your content on other sites. This is also good SEO practice, and requires relatively little investment.

## RUNNING THE NUMBERS

Success is both easy and hard to measure. It's easy if you use SMART goals, and hard if you don't. Success can be engagement, like comments or likes, or clicks, or purchases. Or email sign ups. Each time you post an ad campaign or send an email, you should have a goal attached to it. For email campaigns, a 5% click rate is a decent goal. That's it. No more. Just traffic. Keep it simple.

That being said, you do have to start somewhere. These are a few metrics I use and the benefits and drawbacks:

- Bounce rate. Bounce rate can mean a million things. Low, and they liked your content. High, and they didn't. Or they only liked on specific part.

- Pageviews. A ton of pageviews can mean a ton of interested visitors, or it could mean a few visitors couldn't find the info they were looking for.

- Time on page. A long time on page is a good, if the page has a lot of content. If there isn't much content on the page, that could mean the page is loading slowly, or is confusing.

- Social shares. Likes and comments are nice, but most people don't actually like and comment. They've seen the ad. It needs to appear a few more times before they take action.

Remember that despite all this information and strategy, nothing in marketing is 100%, nothing is permanent, and nothing will not be tested. As long as you document what you do, and identify which actions caused which effects, you'll improve. It's numbers.

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# EPILOGUE

What you should immediately do: Gather all the material from your Pinterest page. Look at what had a positive reaction. Based on those facts, get that email list started!

From there, everything will come.

Here's a list of info and tools to help in the process:

Free Stock Photos: https://www.pexels.com

Online Photo Editor: https://www110.lunapic.com/

Social Hashtag Finder: https://www.whichhashtag.com/

Growth Tools: http://growthtools.io/

Optimize: https://optimize.google.com/optimize/home/

Analytics: https://analytics.google.com/

Facebook Business: https://business.facebook.com

Blogs: https://websitecopywritingservices.com/blog/bucket-brigade-copywriting/

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## BOOT RATINGS

## INTRO

**BRAND**
State of the Business

**SETTING**
Where we are

## SECTIONS

**PROLOGUE**
Core themes

**ONSITE**
Owned Content

**BLOG**
Creative Content

**OFFSITE**
Placed Content

**GOVERNANCE**
Best Practices

**WORKFLOW**
How it's done

## OUTRO

**EPILOGUE**
Getting Started

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